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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KPAO PGOV ECPS ER

SUBJECT: AFP Reporter Ordered to Leave Eritrea

¶1. (SBU) On December 11, AFP stringer and British national Peter Martell was ordered to appear at the office of Eritrean Minister of Information Ali Abdu to discuss his reporting activities in Eritrea. Mr. Abdu objected to an article Mr. Martell filed on November 22 entitled, "Looming Threat of Renewed War Casts Pall over Eritrea," in which Mr. Martell quoted an unnamed ex-fighter from the Eritrean struggle for independence. The ex-fighter made negative remarks about the current state of Eritrea and implied that the GSE's foreign policy regarding the border was ineffective. Mr. Abdu asked Mr. Martell to reveal the name of the ex-fighter, but Mr. Martell refused.

¶2. (SBU) Mr. Abdu then gave Mr. Martell a letter stating that he was no longer allowed to report in Eritrea and was required to leave the country. When asked whether he could apply to return in the future, Mr. Abdu informed Mr. Martell that he could come back to Eritrea but would not be allowed to report. Mr. Martell's expulsion leaves two stringers from western news agencies (Reuters and VOA) in Eritrea.  
MCMULLEN